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(54) **LIGHT EMITTING DIODE WITH STRUCTURED SUBSTRATE**

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(2013.01)

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See application file for complete search history.

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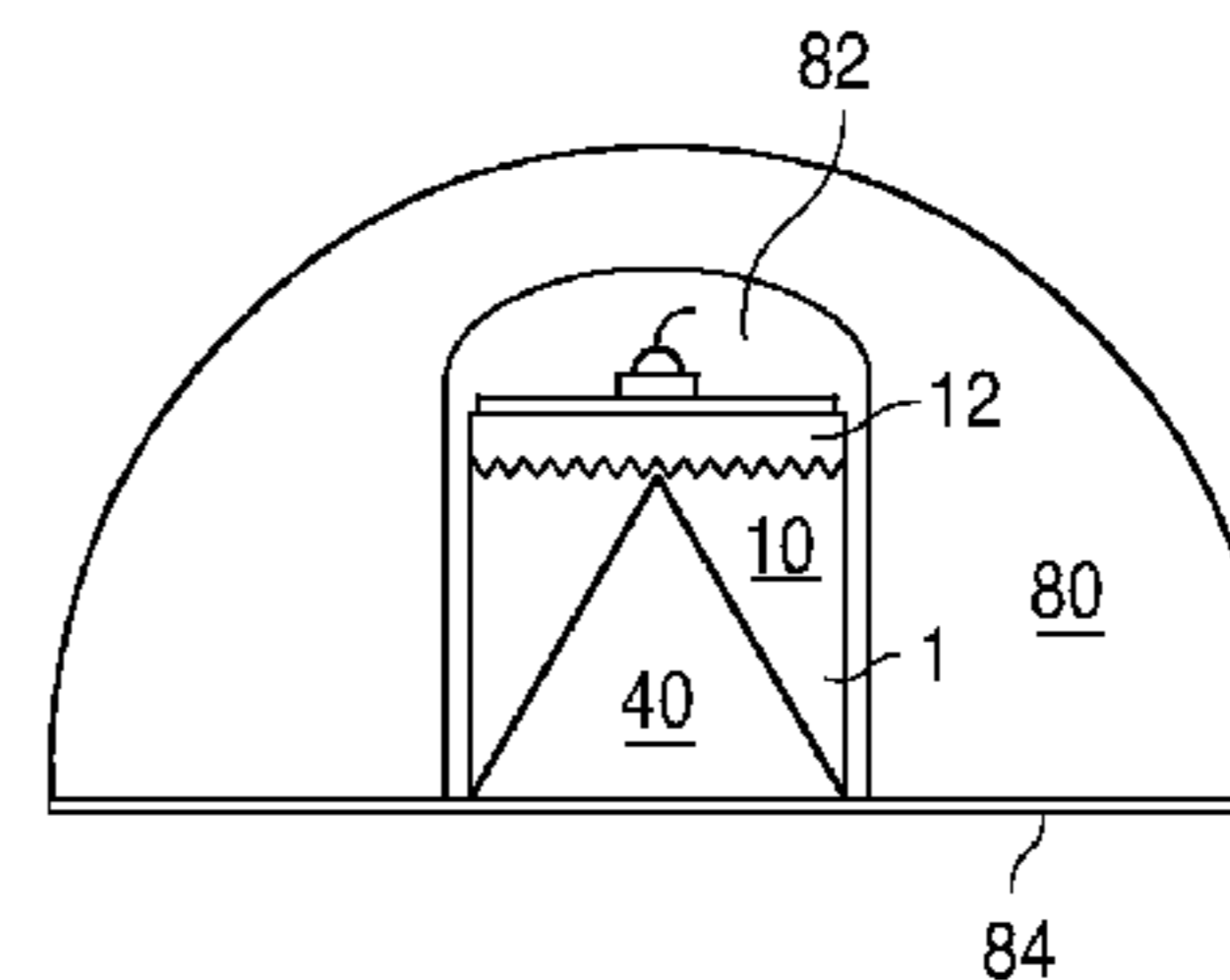
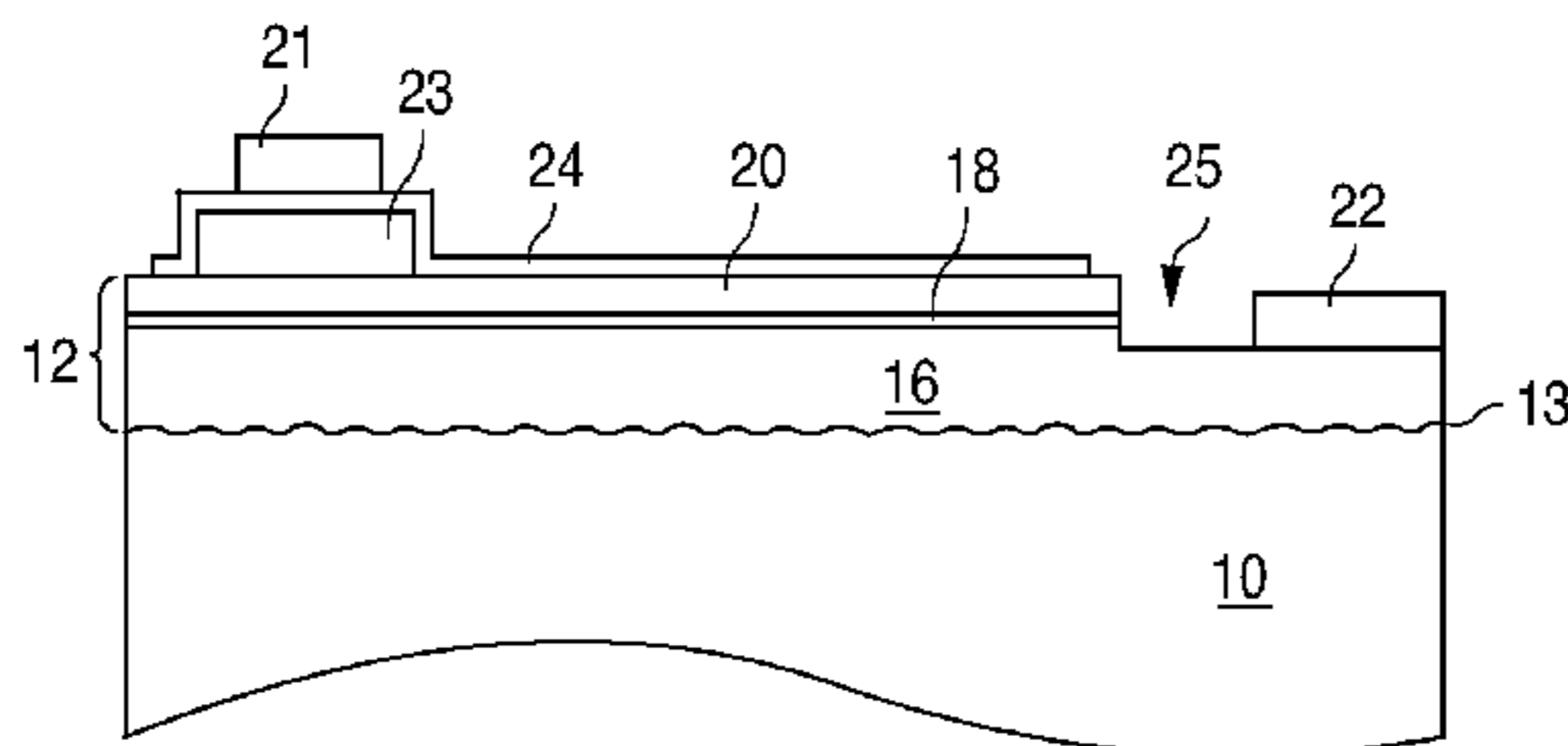
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Embodiments of the invention include a semiconductor light emitting device. The device includes a substrate having a first surface and a second surface opposite the first surface. The device further includes a semiconductor structure disposed on the first surface of the substrate. A cavity is disposed within the substrate. The cavity extends from the second surface of the substrate. The cavity has a sloped side wall.

**20 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets**



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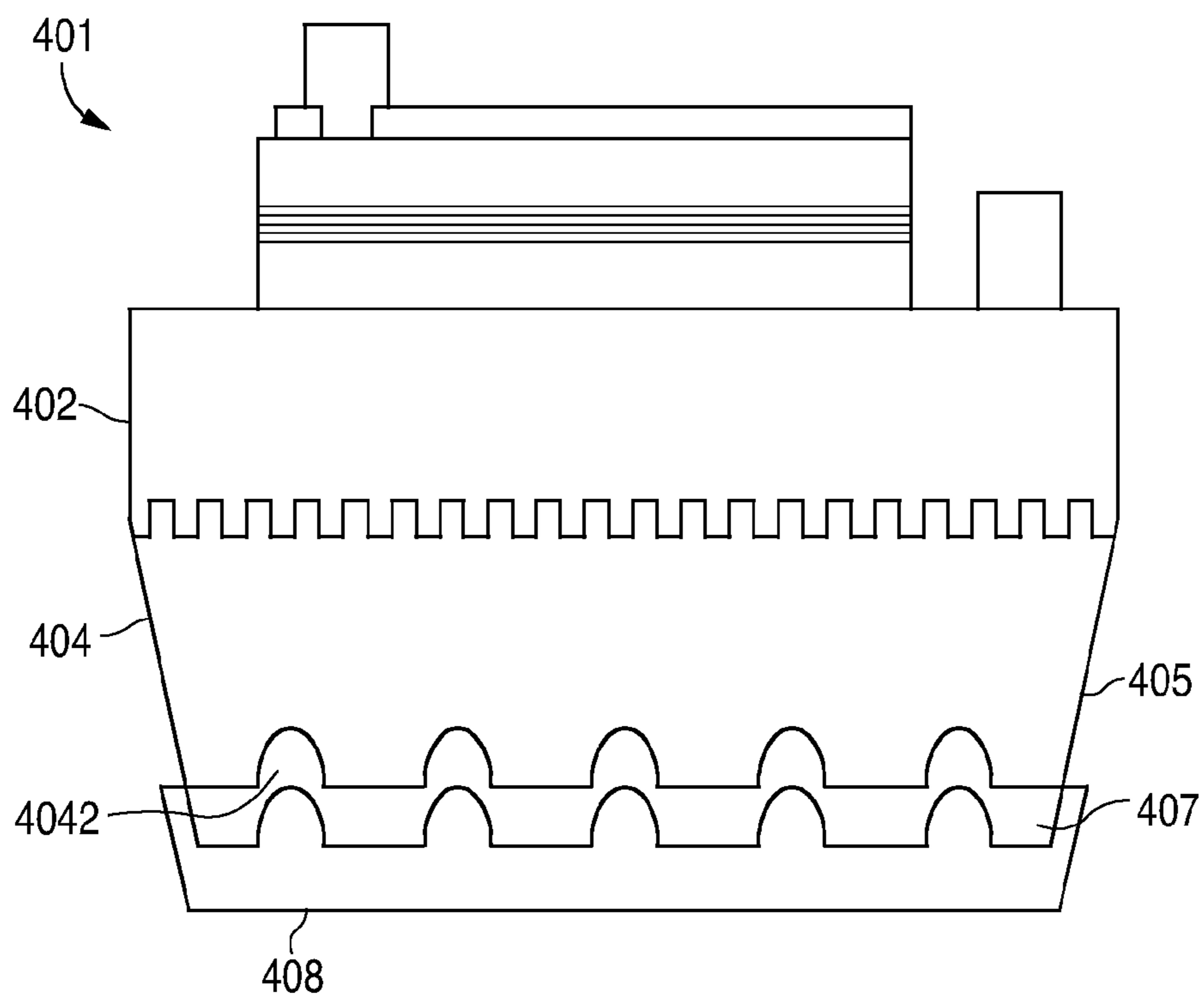
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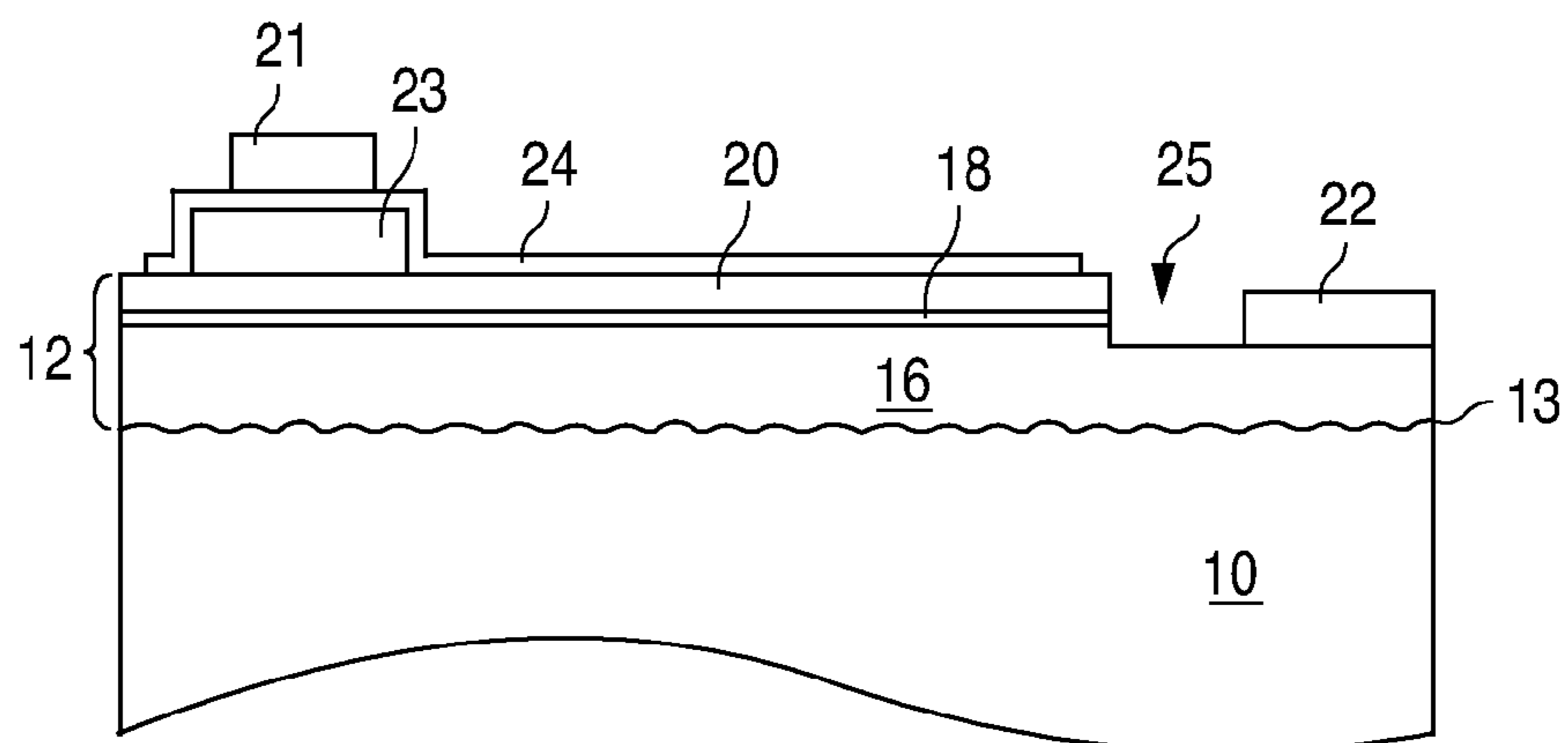
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**FIG. 1**  
(PRIOR ART)



**FIG. 2**

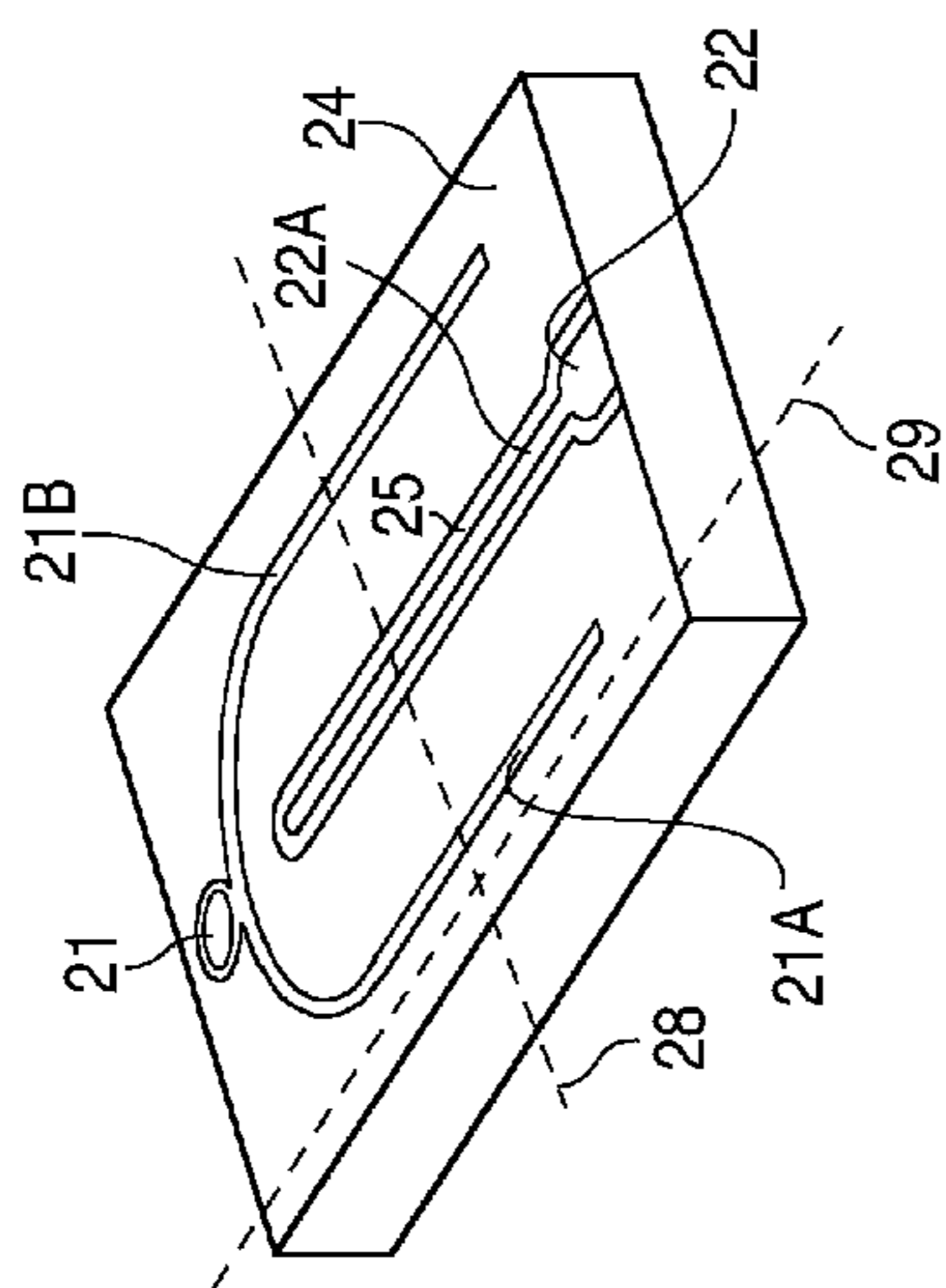


FIG. 3

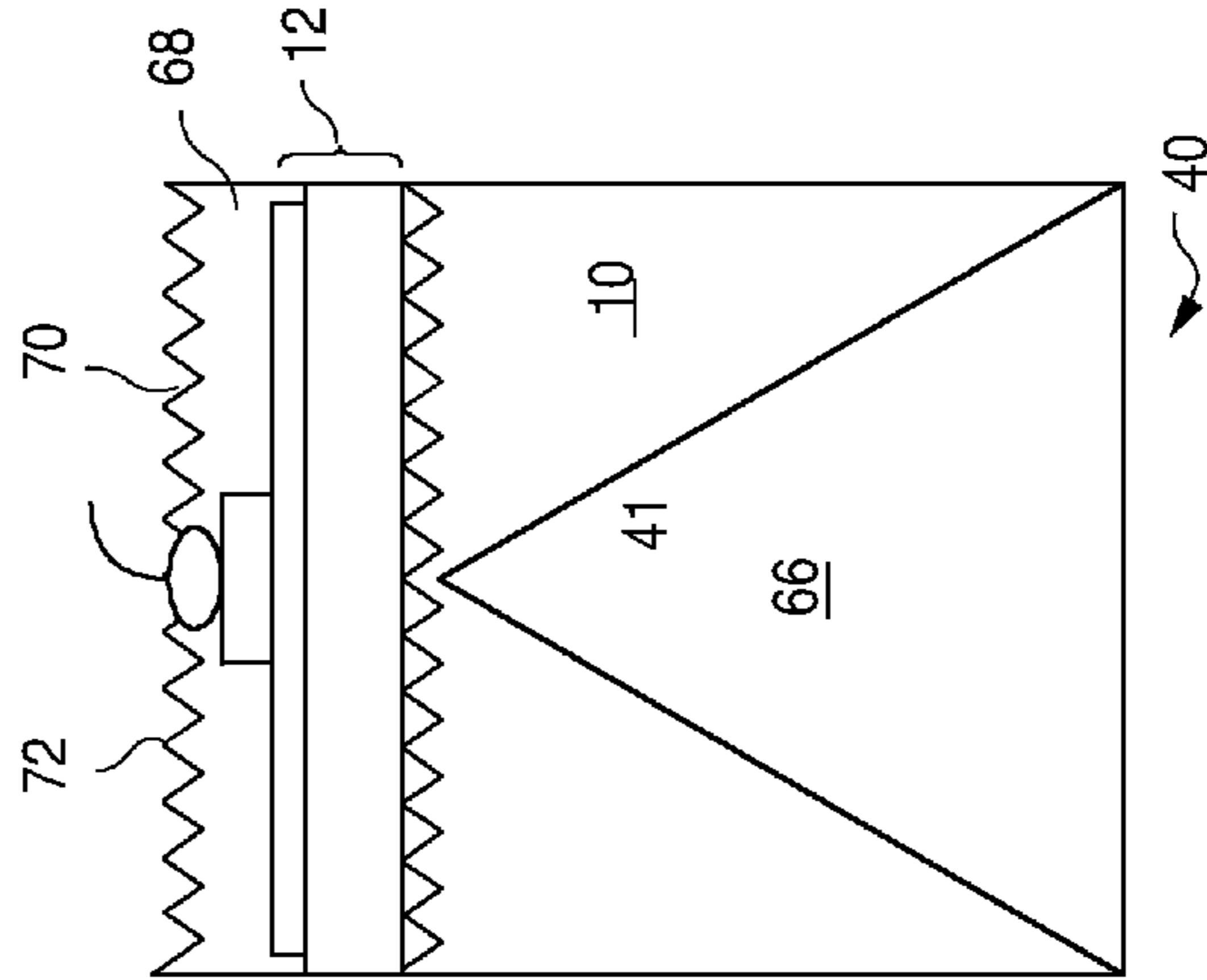


FIG. 6

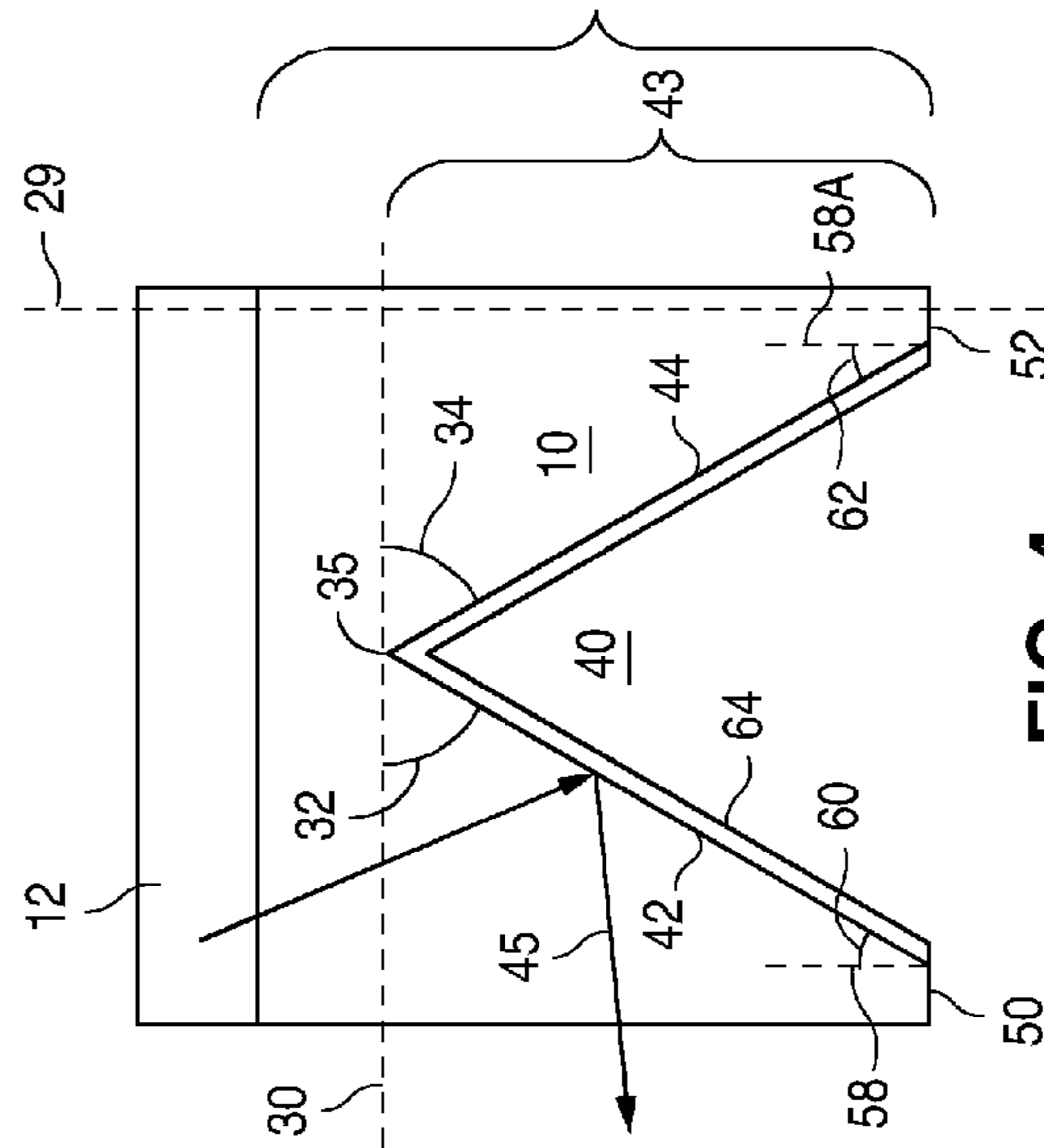


FIG. 4

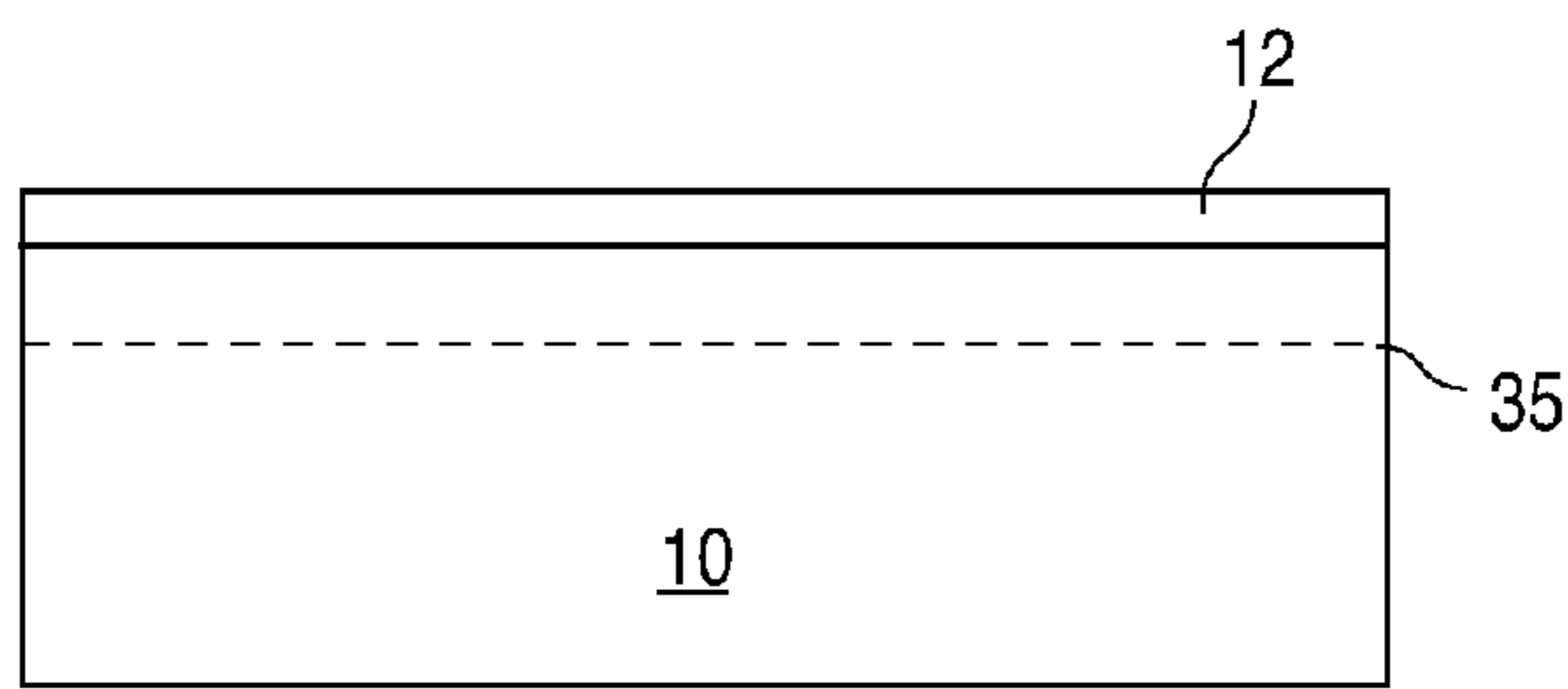


FIG. 5A

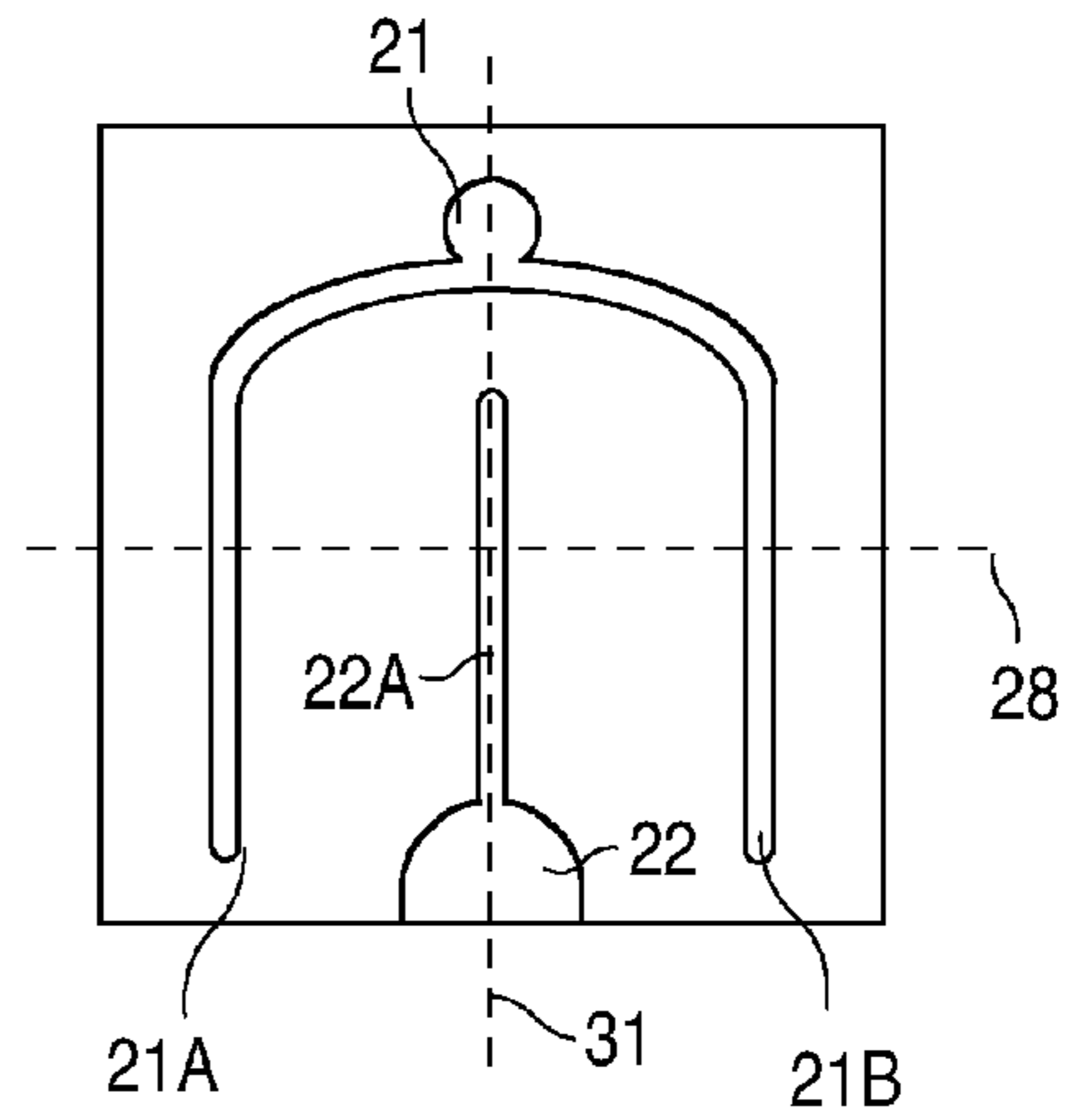


FIG. 5B

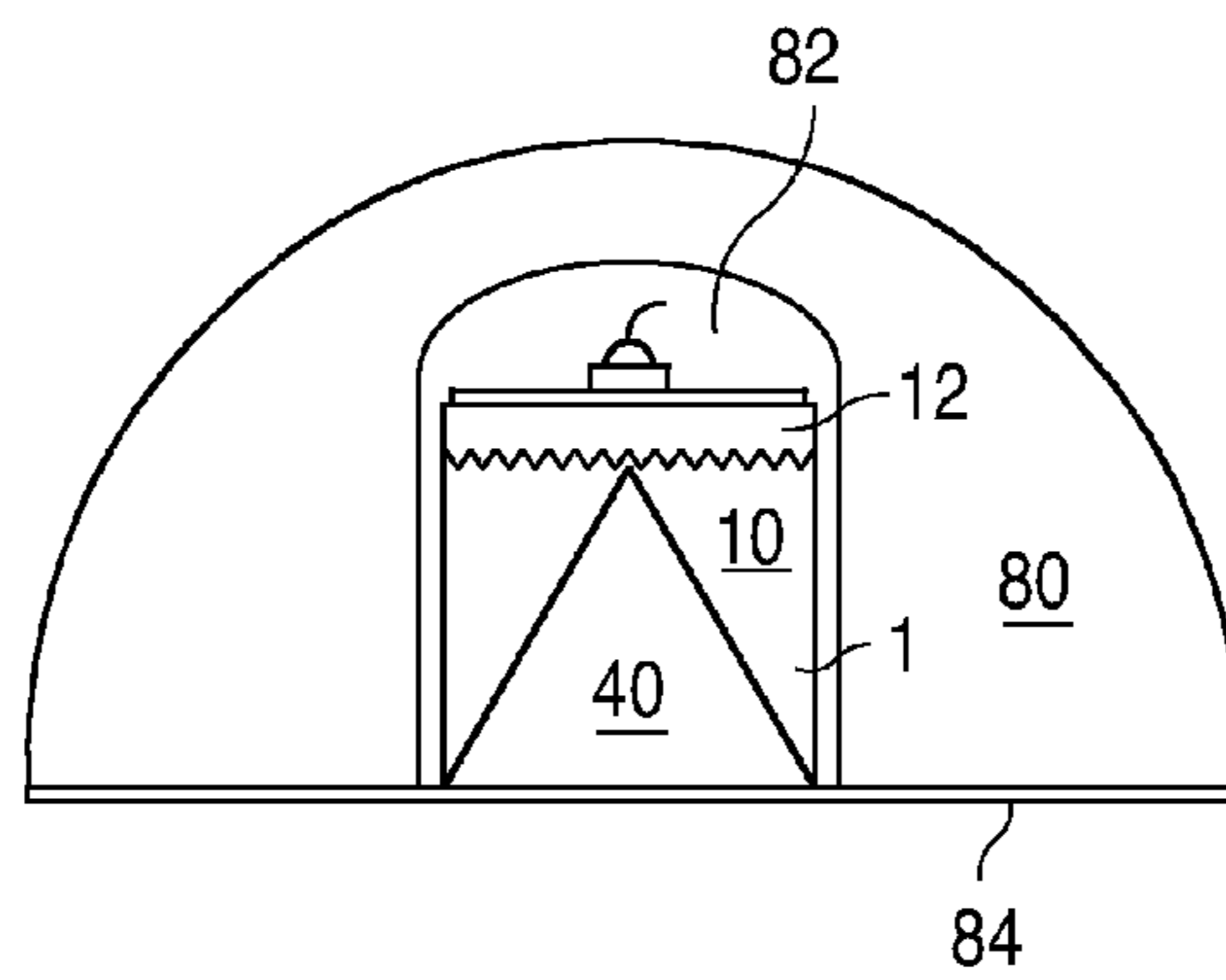


FIG. 7

## 1

**LIGHT EMITTING DIODE WITH  
STRUCTURED SUBSTRATE****CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED  
APPLICATIONS**

The present application is a § 371 application of International Application No. PCT/IB2015/050323 filed on Jan. 16, 2015 and entitled "LIGHT EMITTING DIODE WITH STRUCTURED SUBSTRATE," which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/936,362, filed Feb. 6, 2014. International Application No. PCT/IB2015/050323 and U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/936,362 are incorporated herein.

**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to a light emitting device such as a light emitting diode with a hollow formed in the substrate.

**BACKGROUND**

Semiconductor light-emitting devices including light emitting diodes (LEDs), resonant cavity light emitting diodes (RCLEDs), vertical cavity laser diodes (VCSELs), and edge emitting lasers are among the most efficient light sources currently available. Materials systems currently of interest in the manufacture of high-brightness light emitting devices capable of operation across the visible spectrum include Group III-V semiconductors, particularly binary, ternary, and quaternary alloys of gallium, aluminum, indium, and nitrogen, also referred to as III-nitride materials. Typically, III-nitride light emitting devices are fabricated by epitaxially growing a stack of semiconductor layers of different compositions and dopant concentrations on a sapphire, silicon carbide, silicon, III-nitride, or other suitable substrate by metal-organic chemical vapor deposition (MOCVD), molecular beam epitaxy (MBE), or other epitaxial techniques. The stack often includes one or more n-type layers doped with, for example, Si, formed over the substrate, one or more light emitting layers in an active region formed over the n-type layer or layers, and one or more p-type layers doped with, for example, Mg, formed over the active region. Electrical contacts are formed on the n- and p-type regions.

FIG. 1 illustrates a prior art device described in more detail in US 2012/0012856. US 2012/0012856 describes shaping the sapphire substrate of a III-nitride light emitting diode. US 2012/0012856 describes the device of FIG. 1 in paragraph 45. The device of FIG. 1 is "a GaN light emitting diode [401] comprising a sapphire substrate 404 and an epitaxial layer 402. Slopes 405 and depressions 4042 are both formed" in the substrate. A "lower portion of the sapphire substrate 404 is enveloped in a distributed Bragg reflector 407. A layer of silver glue 408 is applied below the distributed Bragg reflector 407 and on slopes 405 of the sapphire substrate 404 for reflecting light from the slopes 405 of the sapphire substrate 404. As we can expect, the . . . [device of FIG. 1] has good light extraction efficiency due to increase of side light beams."

**SUMMARY**

It is an object of the invention to provide a device with a hollow, or cavity, formed in the substrate. Such a device may efficiently extract light through the sidewalls of the device.

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The cavity may take the form of a chamber in any suitable geometric shape e.g. a prism, prismatoid or a polyhedron.

Embodiments of the invention include a semiconductor light emitting device. The device includes a substrate having a first surface and a second surface opposite the first surface. The device further includes a semiconductor structure disposed on the first surface of the substrate. A cavity is disposed in the substrate. The cavity extends from the second surface of the substrate. The cavity has a sloped side wall.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

FIG. 1 illustrates a prior art device with a shaped sapphire substrate.

FIG. 2 is a cross sectional view of a III-nitride device structure according to embodiments of the invention.

FIG. 3 is a plan view of the device illustrated in FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is a cross sectional view of a device including a shaped substrate, taken along axis 28, shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 5A is a cross sectional view of a device including a shaped substrate, taken along axis 29, shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 5B is a top view of a square device.

FIG. 6 illustrates a device including a high refractive index coating and a thermally conductive material.

FIG. 7 illustrates an encapsulated device with a gap disposed between the device and the encapsulant.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

Embodiments of the invention are directed to light emitting devices such as LEDs that extract light primarily from the sides of the device.

Though in the examples below the semiconductor light emitting device are III-nitride LEDs that emits blue or UV light, semiconductor light emitting devices besides LEDs such as laser diodes and semiconductor light emitting devices made from other materials systems such as other III-V materials, III-phosphide, III-arsenide, II-VI materials, ZnO, or Si-based materials may be used.

FIG. 2 illustrates the device structure of a III-nitride LED that may be used in embodiments of the present invention. Any suitable semiconductor light emitting device structure may be used and embodiments of the invention are not limited to the arrangement illustrated in FIG. 2. The device of FIG. 2 is formed by growing a III-nitride semiconductor structure 12 on a growth substrate 10 as is known in the art. The growth substrate is often sapphire but may be any suitable substrate such as, for example, a non-III-nitride material, sapphire, SiC, Si, GaN, or a composite substrate. A surface 13 of the growth substrate on which the III-nitride semiconductor structure 12 is grown may be patterned, roughened, or textured before growth, which may improve light extraction into the substrate.

The semiconductor structure 12 includes a light emitting or active region 18 sandwiched between n- and p-type regions 16 and 20. An n-type region 16 may be grown first and may include multiple layers of different compositions and dopant concentration including, for example, preparation layers such as buffer layers or nucleation layers, which may be n-type or not intentionally doped, and n- or even p-type device layers designed for particular optical, material, or electrical properties desirable for the light emitting region to efficiently emit light.

A light emitting or active region 18 is grown over the n-type region. Examples of suitable light emitting regions include a single thick or thin light emitting layer, or a

multiple quantum well light emitting region including multiple thin or thick light emitting layers separated by barrier layers.

A p-type region **20** may be grown over the light emitting region. Like the n-type region, the p-type region may include multiple layers of different composition, thickness, and dopant concentration, including layers that are not intentionally doped, or n-type layers.

A portion of the p-type region **20** and the active region **18** is removed to expose a portion of the n-type region **16** on which an n-contact **22** is formed.

A current blocking layer **23** may be formed on the p-type region **20** in an area where a p-contact is formed. Current blocking layer **23** prevents current from being injected in the active region directly beneath the p-contact, which prevents or reduces the amount of light generated in this region. Light generated directly beneath the p-contact may be lost to absorption by the p-contact **21**. The current blocking layer **23** may be formed from any suitable material including, for example, dielectric materials such as oxides of silicon, SiO<sub>2</sub>, and nitrides of silicon.

A transparent conductive layer **24** may be formed over the current blocking layer and the remaining surface of p-type region **20**. Transparent conductive layer **24** may provide current spreading in the p-type region **20**. Examples of suitable materials include transparent conductive oxides such as indium tin oxide (ITO).

A p-contact **21** is formed over optional current blocking layer **23**. The n- and p-contacts **22** and **21** may be any suitable material, such as aluminum, gold, or silver. The n- and p-contacts **22** and **21** need not be the same material. The n- and p-contacts **22** and **21** are electrically isolated from each other by a gap **25** which may be filled with a dielectric such as an oxide of silicon or any other suitable material.

FIG. 3 is a plan view of the n- and p-contacts illustrated in FIG. 2. The n-contact includes an n-contact pad **22** and an n-contact arm **22A** that is narrower than the n-contact pad **22** and extends from the n-contact pad **22**. The p-contact includes a p-contact pad **21** and two p-contact arms **21A** and **21B** that are narrower than the p-contact pad **21** and extend from the p-contact pad **21**. The n-contact arm **22A** interposes the p-contact arms **21A** and **21B** in the arrangement illustrated in FIG. 3. A gap **25** electrically isolates the n-contact pad **22** and n-contact arm **22A** from the p-type region of the device. Any suitable arrangement of contacts may be used. The invention is not limited to the arrangement illustrated in FIG. 3.

Light may be extracted through the top surface of the device through transparent conductive layer **24**.

LED wafers are often diced into square LEDs. In some embodiments, the device is a shape other than square. For example, the device illustrated in FIG. 3 is rectangular. The device may be any suitable shape, including but not limited to polygonal, circular, and hexagonal. In the rectangular device illustrated in FIG. 3, the short side of the device may be, for example, 500 μm wide in some embodiments, at least 350 μm wide in some embodiments, and no more than 650 μm wide in some embodiments. The long side of the rectangular device illustrated in FIG. 3 may be, for example, at least 650 μm wide in some embodiments, no more than 700 μm wide in some embodiments, at least 550 μm wide in some embodiments, and no more than 800 μm wide in some embodiments.

In embodiments of the invention, the substrate **10** is shaped to improve light extraction from the sides of the device. In some embodiments, a cavity, also referred to herein as a hollow, is formed in the substrate **10**. The cavity may take the form of a chamber in any suitable geometric shape e.g. a prism, prismatic or a polyhedron. FIGS. 4 and 5A are cross sections illustrating one example of a cavity.

FIG. 4 is a partial cross section taken along axis **28**, illustrated in FIG. 3. FIG. 5A is a partial cross section taken along axis **29**, illustrated in FIG. 3. FIGS. 4 and 5A show the shape of growth substrate **10**. The semiconductor structure **12** is included in simplified form for reference. The contacts **21** and **22**, current blocking layer **23**, and transparent conductive layer **24** are omitted for clarity.

As illustrated in FIGS. 4 and 5A, the substrate **10** is shaped to form a hollow **40** that extends from the surface of the substrate opposite the semiconductor structure **12** toward the semiconductor structure. The hollow **40** has a triangular cross section in the cross section illustrated in FIG. 4. The external sidewalls of the substrate are substantially vertical, as in a conventional device. The external sidewalls are often formed when the device is diced from a wafer of devices, as in a conventional device.

In the cross section taken along the short side of the rectangular device, illustrated in FIG. 4, the sloped sidewalls **42** and **44** of the hollow **40** each form an acute angle **32** and **34** with a plane **30** that is perpendicular to the growth direction of the semiconductor structure (i.e., parallel to a major plane of the semiconductor structure **12**) and parallel to the surface of substrate **10** on which the semiconductor structure is grown. Angles **32** and **34** may be the same angle though they need not be. The sloped sidewalls **42** and **44** each form an acute angle **60** and **62** with a plane **58** and **58A** that is parallel to the growth direction of the semiconductor structure and perpendicular to the surface of substrate **10** on which the semiconductor structure is grown. Angles **60** and **62** may be the same angle though they need not be. In some embodiments, angles **60** and **62** are 30° or less. In some embodiments, in the cross section illustrated in FIG. 4, in addition to sidewalls **42** and **44**, the hollow **40** has a wall that is parallel to plane **30** (in other words, the cross section is a truncated triangle, rather than the triangle illustrated in FIG. 4). The growth substrate may have surfaces **50** and **52** adjacent to each of sidewalls **42** and **44**. Surfaces **50** and **52** may be parallel to plane **30**. Alternatively, the sidewalls **42** and **44** may extend to the outer edges of the substrate **10**, eliminating surfaces **50** and **52**.

In the cross section taken along the long side of the rectangular device near an edge of the device, illustrated in FIG. 5A, the top **35** of the triangular hollow **40** is illustrated as a dashed line. At every point along the dashed line depicting top **35**, the cross section extending out of the plane of FIG. 5A is the cross section illustrated in FIG. 4. The location of axis **29**, along which the cross section illustrated in FIG. 5A is taken, is illustrated in FIG. 4.

As illustrated by ray **45** in FIG. 4, light emitted by the light emitting region of semiconductor structure **12** toward substrate **10** may be incident on the side walls of the hollow **40**, then reflected to escape the sides of the device.

In the plan view illustrated in FIG. 3, the device is rectangular, such that the cross section illustrated in FIG. 5A is substantially longer than the cross section illustrated in FIG. 4. In embodiments where the device is square or nearly square, as illustrated in FIG. 5B, the cross sections taken along axes **28** and **31** are similar in length. In some such embodiments, cross sections taken along both axes **28** and **31** may be the cross section illustrated in FIG. 4.

The shaped substrate may be formed by, for example, removing substrate material to form hollow **40**, or by selectively growing a substrate to form hollow **40**. Any suitable removal technique may be used, such as etching or laser blasting. The angle of incidence during laser blasting may be selected to form the shape illustrated in the cross section illustrated in FIG. 4.

The hollow comprises a significant portion of the volume of the substrate **10**. For example, hollow **40** may be at least 50% of the total volume of substrate **10** (i.e., the total

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volume of substrate **10** being the volume of hollow **40** plus the volume of the remaining portion of substrate **10**) in some embodiments, and at least 60% of the total volume of substrate **10** in some embodiments.

The substrate **10** has a thickness **41**, illustrated in FIG. 4, the thickness **41** being measured in a direction perpendicular to both the first (top) surface on which the semiconductor structure **12** is formed and the second (bottom) surface from which the hollow **40** extends. The thickness **41** of substrate **10** may be at least 400  $\mu\text{m}$  thick in some embodiments, at least 500  $\mu\text{m}$  thick in some embodiments, and no more than 1000  $\mu\text{m}$  thick in some embodiments. In some embodiments where the device is rectangular, the thickness **41** of substrate **10** is at least 90% of the length of the short side of the rectangle.

The deepest part **43** of the hollow **40**, illustrated in FIG. 4, measured in the same direction as substrate thickness **41**, may be at least 70% of the thickness of substrate **10** in some embodiments, at least 80% of the thickness of substrate **10** in some embodiments, at least 90% of the thickness of substrate **10** in some embodiments, at least 200  $\mu\text{m}$  deep in some embodiments, at least 300  $\mu\text{m}$  deep in some embodiments, and no more than 500  $\mu\text{m}$  deep in some embodiments.

In some embodiments, the sloped sidewalls of the hollow **40** are coated with a reflective material **64**, as illustrated in FIG. 4. Any suitable reflective material formed by any suitable technique may be used including, for example, reflective metals such as silver, reflective coatings such as white reflective paint, or multi-layer structures such as distributed Bragg reflectors (DBRs). The reflective material **64** may be electrically conductive, or electrically insulating.

FIG. 6 illustrates a device including a high refractive index coating and a thermally conductive material.

In some embodiments, all or a portion of the hollow **40** is filled with a thermally conductive material **66**, as illustrated in FIG. 6. Any suitable material may be used including, for example, metal such as copper. The thermally conductive material may be thermally connected to a heat sink or other suitable external structure.

In some embodiments, a high refractive index coating **68** is formed on the surface of the device on which the n- and p-contacts are formed, as illustrated in FIG. 6. The high refractive index coating **68** may improve light extraction from the sides of the device by increasing total internal reflection at the top surface of the device, which reduces the amount of light extracted from the top of the device. The high refractive index coating **68** may have a refractive index of at least 1.5 in some embodiments, at least 1.6 in some embodiments, at least 1.8 in some embodiments, and at least 2 in some embodiments. The high refractive index coating **68** may be any suitable material formed by any suitable technique. Examples include  $\text{SiO}_x$ ,  $\text{SiO}_2$ ,  $\text{SiN}$ , and dielectric materials formed by evaporation. The high refractive index coating **68** may be a multi-layer structure in some embodiments.

In some embodiments, a top surface **70** of the high refractive index coating **68** is roughened, patterned, or textured to improve light extraction. The roughened, patterned, or textured surface may diffract light and increase the amount of light that is radiated out the sides of the device. A photonic crystal structure or a grating structure optimized for side emission may be formed on the top surface **70** of high refractive index coating **68**. For example, the top surface **70** of high refractive index coating **68** may be formed into 3-sided pyramids **72** in a periodic arrangement, such as, for example, a triangular lattice, honeycomb lattice,

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or any other suitable periodic arrangement. The pyramids **72** may be, for example, at least 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  tall in some embodiments, no more than 2  $\mu\text{m}$  tall in some embodiments, and 1  $\mu\text{m}$  tall in some embodiments. The bases of pyramids **72** may be, for example, at least 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  wide in some embodiments, no more than 2  $\mu\text{m}$  wide in some embodiments, and 1  $\mu\text{m}$  wide in some embodiments.

FIG. 7 illustrates an encapsulated device. The encapsulant **80** may be any suitable material such as, for example, epoxy, resin, glass, or silicone. The encapsulant **80** may be formed by any suitable technique including, for example, molding or a sol-gel process. In some embodiments, the encapsulant is formed separately then disposed over the device **1**, for example by gluing directly to the device **1** or gluing to a mount **84** on which the device is disposed. In some embodiments, the device is disposed on a mount **84** and the encapsulant **80** and the mount **84** completely surround the device to prevent contaminants from reaching the device.

In some embodiments, the encapsulant **80** is shaped into a lens or other suitable optical element. For example, the encapsulant **80** may be shaped into the dome lens illustrated in FIG. 7, a Fresnel lens, or any other suitable shape. As illustrated in FIG. 7, the encapsulant **80** may extend over the sidewalls of the device **1**. The encapsulant **80** may be wider along the bottom of the structure than the device **1**.

In some embodiments, the encapsulant **80** is in direct contact with the device **1**. In some embodiments, as illustrated in FIG. 7, a gap **82** separates device **1** and encapsulant **80**. Gap **82** is often filled with air but may be filled with any suitable material. In some embodiments, encapsulant **80** has a high index of refraction. For example, the index of refraction of encapsulant **80** may be greater than 1 in some embodiments, at least 1.5 in some embodiments, and at least 1.8 in some embodiments. The material filling gap **82**, if gap **82** is included, may be a low absorption, low index of refraction material. For example, the index of refraction if the material filling gap **82** may be no more than 1 in some embodiments.

Embodiments of the invention may have advantages over other available devices from which light is extracted primarily from the sides. The embodiments described herein may have improved extraction uniformity and reduced spot-tiness, as compared to currently available side-emission devices. The embodiments described herein may have a high extraction efficiency of light from the sides of the device. The embodiments described herein are fairly compact and cost effective, because they may be used as illustrated, without complicated, large, and expensive secondary optics.

Having described the invention in detail, those skilled in the art will appreciate that, given the present disclosure, modifications may be made to the invention without departing from the spirit of the inventive concept described herein. Any combination of the features described above is within the scope of the invention. For example, features illustrated above may be included in other embodiments, or omitted from other embodiments. Therefore, it is not intended that the scope of the invention be limited to the specific embodiments illustrated and described.

The invention claimed is:

1. A semiconductor light emitting device comprising:
  - a substrate having a first surface and a second surface opposite the first surface;
  - a semiconductor structure disposed on the first surface of the substrate, the semiconductor structure comprising a light emitting region sandwiched between n- and p-type regions, an n-contact connected to the n-type region, and a p-contact connected to the p-type region, the n-



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- and p-contacts formed on the surface of the semiconductor structure opposite the first surface;  
 a hollow disposed in the substrate, the hollow extending from the second surface of the substrate, the hollow having a sloped side wall; and  
 a high refractive index material disposed over the n- and p-contacts, the high refractive index material having a refractive index of at least 1.5.
2. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1 wherein:  
 the substrate has a thickness in a first direction, the first direction being perpendicular to the first and second surfaces; and  
 a deepest part of the hollow measured in the first direction is at least 70% of the thickness of the substrate in the first direction.
3. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1 wherein the hollow comprises at least 50% of a volume comprising the volume of the hollow plus the volume of the substrate.
4. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1 wherein:  
 the semiconductor light emitting device is rectangular; and  
 a thickness of the substrate at a thickest point of the substrate is at least 90% of a length of a short side of the rectangular semiconductor light emitting device.
5. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1 wherein an angle between the sloped side wall of the hollow and a plane perpendicular to the first surface is no more than 30°.
6. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1 wherein the first surface is textured.
7. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1, wherein a majority of light emitted from the light emitting region is extracted into the substrate.
8. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1, wherein light emitted from the light emitting region is extracted out of the semiconductor light emitting device through sides of the substrate and sides of the semiconductor structure.
9. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1, wherein the semiconductor light emitting device is a die having four sides at outer edges of the die, each side connecting the second surface of the substrate with the high refractive index material, and the hollow extends along an entire length of the die between two opposite sides of the die.

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10. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1, wherein the sloped sidewall of the hollow is coated with a reflective material.
11. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1, wherein the hollow is filled with a thermally conductive material.
12. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1 wherein the hollow has a triangular cross section along a first axis.
13. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 12 wherein the hollow has a triangular cross section along a second axis perpendicular to the first axis.
14. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 13 wherein the semiconductor light emitting device is square.
15. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 1 further comprising:  
 a transparent, conductive material disposed between the semiconductor structure and the high refractive index material.
16. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 15 wherein a surface of the high refractive index material opposite the transparent conductive material is textured.
17. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 16 wherein the textured surface of the high refractive index material comprises a plurality of 3-sided pyramids arranged in a lattice.
18. A semiconductor light emitting device comprising  
 a substrate having a first surface and a second surface opposite the first surface;  
 a semiconductor structure disposed on the first surface of the substrate, the semiconductor structure comprising a light emitting region sandwiched between n- and p-type regions, an n-contact connected to the n-type region, and a p-contact connected to the p-type region;  
 a hollow disposed in the substrate, the hollow extending from the second surface of the substrate, the hollow having a sloped side wall;  
 a lens disposed over the semiconductor structure and the substrate, and extending along sidewalls of the semiconductor structure and the substrate; and  
 a gap disposed between the semiconductor structure and the lens.
19. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 18, wherein the gap extends between the lens and the sidewalls of the semiconductor structure and the substrate.
20. The semiconductor light emitting device of claim 18, wherein the lens completely surrounds the semiconductor structure and the substrate above the second surface.

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